

Washington, D.C. Congressman Sanford Bishop today announced passage of the 2007 Farm bill, which includes vital investments in our nation's family farmers, renewable energy, rural development, and our most vulnerable citizens. The bill provides a five-year reauthorization of the farm, rural development, conservation, and nutrition programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is fully compliant with the "pay-as-you-go" rules instituted by the House of Representatives at the beginning of this year.

"I am very pleased to support a piece of legislation which provides a strong safety net for small-scale and disadvantaged farmers as well as the millions of American citizens who live below the poverty line and are dependents on Federal nutrition assistance," said Congressman Bishop. "Also, I am particularly pleased that provisions within this bill improve the quality of life of people living in our rural communities by providing critical health care, emergency, and communications assistance to underserved areas."

To fight hunger in America, the Farm bill expands nutrition programs that help 35 million low-income families by providing an additional \$4 billion over the next five years. It also nearly doubles the funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program so that food banks, soup kitchens, and other emergency feeding sites have adequate resources. The measure further extends the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program to all 50 states.

Additionally, and for the first time in the Farm bill, farmers in commodity programs have a choice between traditional price protections and a new market-oriented revenue coverage payment plan to ensure protection against significant crop losses. This includes addressing the needs of cotton, peanuts, soybeans, and other crops important to Southwest and Middle Georgia.

Historic investments in conservation and improving the environment, such as \$4.3 billion to preserve farm and ranch land, improve water quality and quantity, enhance soil conservation, air quality, and wildlife habitat on working land, as well as incentives for farmers to use "green" growing methods are also included in the bill.

"With this legislation, we are making this country greener, cleaner, and healthier. We are also ensuring that this country's \$3.5 trillion agricultural industry remains robust and globally competitive."

The Senate must now consider its version of the Farm bill, and then be reconciled with the House version in a Conference Committee before the final bill is sent to President Bush.

For a complete summary of the 2007 Farm bill, please visit the House Agriculture Committee's Farm bill homepage.